

Reflections on the Costa Rica Trip

By Larissa Swartz

So was Costa Rica really the great mission trip we all expected it to be? Well, to answer that question, you'd probably have to ask everyone in the youth group, because I'm sure all of our answers would be a little different. For me, although it was a great trip and I don't regret it at all, it wasn't everything I expected it to be. Part of the reason for that was because I'd already hit my spiritual "high" during Bethel Camp and couldn't really go any higher. Another reason was because I felt the time we spent there was too short. Don't get me wrong. I learned so much there, but a lot of it was God reinforcing things or expanding on things he'd already taught and revealed to me at Bethel Camp. Of course, God being God, He did reveal some new things to me as well.

Some of the things I learned came through our stay at Pura Vida. The themes for our time there were "Glorifying God" and "Being Real." One issue God really spoke to me on is pride. In one of the sessions, Delynn Hoover argued that pride is the root of all sin and gave us a list of 25 "fruits of pride" to write down. Let's just say that I was very surprised at how many I identified well with. These were some of the ones that hit me the hardest: having a judgmental spirit, being more concerned with others' opinions than with God's, pointing out the others' errors rather than dealing with your own, and seeing what is missing rather than what God is doing.

Continued on page 4...



From left: Twila Snider, Kris Freed, Sara Gregg, Ryan Freed, Larissa Swartz, Emily Zachrich, Rachel Troyer, Kevin Swartz, Joy Church, Brenda Zachrich, Caleb Montrose, Amy Rosati

Inside this Issue

Reflections on the Costa Rica Trip	1
Word of the Month	1
The Word of God - Powerful and Effective	2
Elders' Notes	2
His Hands and Feet	3
My Take on Job	4

London Christian Fellowship
215 US Rt. 42 NE, London, OH 43140
(740) 852-4268

www.lcfweb.org

London Christian Fellowship seeks to develop authentic and passionate followers of Jesus Christ.

Word of the Month

By Reuben Sairs

Aramaic

There are three languages to consider when thinking about the Biblical languages. Hebrew is the language of the Old Testament. Greek is the language of the New Testament. The third language is a little more obscure. Aramaic puts in brief appearances in both testaments, mostly in the Old Testament—especially in Ezra and Daniel. Aramaic was a "diplomatic language" in the ancient Middle East, used to conduct business and government. Some of the Bible passages that use it in Ezra are actually the official letters that are part of the story.

Aramaic is a language much like Hebrew in the same sense that English and German or Italian and French are related. However, Aramaic and Hebrew speakers didn't understand each other's spoken language as the dramatic story of the siege of Jerusalem in 701 B.C. shows (the story is found in 2 Kings 18:26 and Isaiah 36:11). By the time of the New Testament many Jews were probably bilingual and could speak Hebrew and Aramaic.

Aramaic was probably Jesus' mother tongue, although as with most everything else, experts don't agree! We catch Jesus speaking it in Mark 5:41. "Taking the

Continued on page 2...

The Word of God— Powerful and Effective

A Message from the Pastor

By Rob Swartz



I was a bit discouraged after our small group meeting. I had studied well, but things didn't go the way I had planned. The passage, Mark 10, on divorce and remarriage, was a challenging one. The discussion took some rabbit trails. As is common in our group, distractions shifted the focus off of our study from time to time. I could have done better, I lamented. Would the discussion make any difference? I went to bed with these thoughts heavy on my heart.

The next morning I got an email. "I just wanted you to know how much last night touched me." The woman went on to say how God clearly spoke to her about her marriage relationship.

God spoke to me through her email. I was very encouraged...but not because I had led an amazing Bible study. I knew better. I was encouraged because God's word had proven to be powerful and effective. The Holy Spirit had taken the words of scripture and driven them deep into her heart. I have seen that happen countless times. It is here that my confidence rests.

Moses, after conveying the commandments of God to the Israelites, reminds them in Deuteronomy 32:47, "They are not just idle words for you—they are your life." Jesus refutes the devil in the desert by quoting Deuteronomy 8:3, which states that our sustenance does not depend on food alone, "but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." The study of God's word is crucial and essential for us to survive as Christians. No wonder Paul is so adamant with Timothy to "Preach the word...with great patience and careful instruction."

It is for these reasons that London Christian Fellowship is dedicated to the preaching and teaching of God's word through sermons, adult discipleship classes, Sunday school classes, small groups, encouraging individual study, and other ways. We will do our best to present the word in an engaging way and help you relate it to your lives, but our confidence is in the power of God to change you through his word.

I know it's a struggle to read our Bibles. I know sermons seem boring sometimes. However, I would encourage all of us to develop our appetite for the word of God, the God who is the creator of all, the ruler of all, and the giver of life. May we join the psalmist in saying, "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth."

Elders' Notes

Ideas and thoughts from recent meetings

The elders' team discussed their thoughts about the recently held CMC conference at Cedarville, and wanted to express their sincere appreciation to each one who helped out. There were many people from LCF who were involved in conference in many ways. Each one did an excellent job, from helping with the children and registration to teaching, writing, acting, etc.

They discussed where things are with the building project. The church will be having a sub sale this month and plans are being made for an auction next year. Currently we are falling short of our monthly fundraising goal for the building fund. The team discussed what the options are if we have not raised the goal of \$500,000 by December. They realized that the current projected cost of the new building is only an estimate, so Richard will meet with the expansion team soon to begin working towards getting an official bid by the end of the year. The team will also look at the monthly donations specifically given for the building fund each month to help decide how much of a monthly payment the church can afford.

There will be a Ministry Fair Sunday evening, September 19. All the ministry teams will be available to highlight what they do and encourage people to sign up to help in various ways. The fellowship team will plan the details for an evening meal.

The next Adult Discipleship class is scheduled for the start of the fall quarter on September 5. Reuben will teach the fall quarter, and will contact other people about the possibility of teaching other classes throughout the year.

The elders' team decided to hold off for a little while on the pastoral reviews since there seem to be quite a few other things needing their attention right now.

This past month Phil Hostetler has taken on the LCF treasurer responsibilities. A big thank you to Keith Scheffel for the wonderful job he has done with keeping our financial records over the past 6 years!

Word of the Month continued from page 1...

child by the hand, he said to her, "Talitha kum!" (which translated means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!") Maybe he was just saying it in Aramaic for the girl's benefit? Apparently when he cries from the cross in Mark 15:34, "My God, My God, have you forsaken me?" he is calling out in Aramaic.

Aramaic words that were sometimes left untranslated in English include *abba* (father), *rabboni* (teacher), *Gehenna* (the name for hell), *maranatha* (our lord come), and *hosanna* (save now), as well as names that use the term "bar," meaning "the son of," like Simon bar Jonah. And there are other examples. Aramaic remained the dominant language of the Biblical part of the world for several hundred years until it was replaced by another related language. The Oxford Companion to the Bible says, "Aramaic was eventually replaced by Arabic in the Near East as a result of the spread of Islam. A western form survives in a few Syrian villages."

His Hands and Feet

What people in the church are doing in the community

Featured this month: Marcus and Brenda Freed. They volunteer at the London Correctional Institution, and Marcus took time to answer a few questions.

What do you do at the prison?

I lead a Bible study on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights. We have discussions in a circle like a kind of Sunday School Lesson. They are an hour long, and we always end with 10 minutes of prayer.

How long have you been doing this?

I started in the fall of 1998, so this fall makes 12 years for me. Brenda just started this past year. She was much more interested in joining me after her illness. Her first visit was when the Gospel Echoes in the fall of 2008. About a year later she was approved to go in as a regular volunteer with me.

What led you to start going?

I had no earth-shaking calling. I was involved in Promise Keepers and a brother at a Christian church in London just ask me to join him and a small group of volunteers. I had not thought about this opportunity to serve God, and I believed it was a great "God fit" for me.



It seems like a challenging thing to do. Were you intimidated by the idea at first?

My first few visits, I didn't know what to expect. I soon was co-leading, and within a couple of years I was doing Wednesday night studies completely on my own. Then when my coworker had a stroke in 2008, I end up doing two weekly studies on my own.

Tell us about the prisoners.

On Sunday morning meetings, from 8-9 a.m., I meet with about 30 inmates in the main stockade which is the walled-in institution. About 8-10 of the group have been faithful for a number of years. Two have been coming almost the whole 12 years I have been there. These two are long-termers, with sentences of 30-plus years. I greatly appreciate these two. They usually sit on either side of me and help in very subtle, encouraging ways. They have welcomed Brenda, and we have no plans to end this volunteering. I have on occasions said to the guys, "I have no 'out date.'"

What are they like?

The inmate brothers that are regulars are very much like ordinary men you would meet in many church circles. I never ask why they are incarcerated, but over the years I have found out why for many. They are men who just wish they could have made a few different choices earlier in their lives. About 80-90% have some drug or alcohol connection to their crime.

Did anything surprise you about going to the prison?

Yes, I have met two Mennonite inmates over the years of my volunteering. One is still incarcerated at London and regularly attends the Sunday study. His wife goes to a CMC church and his pastor comes and visits him about twice a year because his home church is in another state.

What has been the most rewarding thing for you?

The outpouring of love from the men during the difficult illness years with Brenda in 2007 and 2008. They prayed for us and sent cards and words of encouragement to me.

What is your goal?

My goal is to give incarcerated men the opportunity to be discipled and grow in their journey of faith. I also have a goal to have the inmates leave and continue to be actively involved in a Christian church.

My Take

Thoughts on the story of Job



Bob Zachrich

When I think of Job, I am just amazed at the long speeches his “friends” direct at him. The writer of this book had a very keen insight into human nature, as this story plays itself out even in our world today. Sometimes when people suffer we wonder, or sometimes ask them, just what sin they have committed to make God so mad?



Molly Rosati

When I get to the book of Job I skip to my favorite parts. I like to read God’s response to Job. Job spoke one of my “life verses” in 31:1—“I have made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.” Now you may laugh, but the discipline of making a commitment to not look (or take a second look) at things that cause impure thoughts has really helped with peace of mind.



Vicki Sairs

I love the book of Job because it tackles hard questions with relentless honesty, in a manner entirely worthy of the God who created and sustains the universe. What would we do without this book? It makes us come right up against the sovereignty of God and still have to love and trust him. And the poetry! How awful it would be to have these subjects treated in an academic or dumbed-down way.



Goldie Rosati

I think Job had a will of iron. He looked to God for everything.

Looking Ahead...

- Aug. 21: Sub Sale
- Aug. 28-19: Church camp out
- Sept. 5: Fall SS quarter & Adult Discipleship class begin
- Sept. 11: Shekinah Festival
- Sept. 19: Ministry Fair, 5:00 p.m.

Costa Rica continued from page 1...

“Do hard things” was another concept God was speaking to me about and is continuing to speak to me about as I prepare for my college years. And He did make me put this concept into practice while I was there. For starters, I had to give my full testimony (first time since I started in high school) in front of everybody at the base (something like 100 people).

Believe me when I say this was very nerve-wracking for me. But you know what’s cool? God prepared me for it and then walked me through it. It was really weird when I found out I was to share, because for the last 24 hours, I had this crazy feeling it was going to be me. I was very nervous when I started sharing, but a little way into my testimony, I was just filled with an awesome sense of peace and it was smooth sailing from there on out.

Another thing this trip gave us was a better sense of unity in our youth group. We drew closer together as a group as we learned how to be real with each other. Sharing our testimonies with each other really enhanced our experience. There were a couple of times we got to spend more time with each other, sharing and worshiping, because our initial plans got rained out. All this amounted to deeper and stronger relationships with each other as we got to know each other on a different level, and see how others responded in certain situations they were thrown into.

For me, the best part of the experience was working with, and for, the Costa Rican people. They are some of the most generous and loving people I’ve ever met! What’s really awesome is that we’re able



to continue building some of the relationships we formed there via the internet (Facebook and Skype). I personally enjoyed seeing the other members of our group trying and succeeding in establishing relationships despite the language barrier.

All in all, this Costa Rica trip was an enriching and worthwhile experience that helped us learn more about each other, ourselves, and most of all God. My prayer is that we would all take what we learned from the trip and continue to apply it in our lives by glorifying God and being real. That’s when the true impact of this trip will really manifest itself: when we

The LCF Connection

A monthly newsletter designed to enhance communication at London Christian Fellowship

If you’d like to make comments on any of the stories or “LCF Connection” in general, email us at: connection@lcfweb.org.
Editor: Andrew Sharp; Layout: Doris Swartz